

APPENDIX C

ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

Against a backdrop of a slow economic recovery, the City of Seattle is pursuing an integrated three-pronged approach to increasing self-sufficiency:

HELP SEATTLE'S CHILDREN

The lives of children reveal the most dramatic impacts of economic disparities. More than 18% of Seattle's 5 to 17 year-olds fall below the federal poverty line and more than one in four Seattle teenagers fail to graduate from high school (one in two youth of color), substantially increasing their risk of living a life of poverty. In addition to programs included in the Consolidated Plan, Seattle has initiated a number of programs that offer positive alternatives and increase opportunities for children

- **Seattle Early Reading First:** Works with early childhood education centers to promote literacy development of preschool children in low-income, high risk communities
- **Project SOAR:** Promotes the development of healthy children through nurturing home environments, early identification and intervention around developmental issues, high quality child care and out-of-school time activities as part of a collaboration with United Way of King County
- **Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program:** Provides preschool education that helps children from families whose income is below 110% of the federal poverty line to be prepared for school
- **Seattle Youth Employment:** Increases the number of youth who receive the support needed to complete high school, stay out of the juvenile justice system, and develop the skills and assets necessary to make a positive transition to adulthood.
- **Homeless Families, Children, and Youth Support Services:** Provides assistance for homeless families, children and youth in moving to safe, stable housing by leveraging additional support.
- **Seattle Youth Employment:** Provides job training, placement and educational enhancement to low-income youth.
- **Summer Sack Lunch:** Provides nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snacks in low income neighborhoods for children who qualify for free and reduced lunches.
- **Upward Bound:** Offers educational enhancement and a college preparatory program for low-income high school youth.

INCREASE FAMILY INCOMES

A recent national study found that Washington State is among the ten states where income inequality has grown the most in the last decade. The Seattle area is home to an estimated 59,000 millionaires, more per capita than any other place in the U.S. At the same time, 64,068 live below the federal poverty line. In the face of these realities, the City of Seattle is promoting strategies that boost the incomes of the poor and build skills that lead to livable wage jobs:

Raise family incomes by increasing participation in existing benefit programs:

Help for Working Families (HFWF) is an initiative developed by the City of Seattle, aimed at increasing the economic stability of low- and moderate-income families by connecting them with available public benefits to help them be more financially stable. This effort provides access to Child Care subsidy, Food Assistance, Health Care, Energy/Utility Assistance and Earned Income Tax Credit. The Help for Working Families model is a system of “one-stop” access that reaches clients where they live, work and go for services eliminating unnecessary barriers to access.

In 2002, the City shifted the strategy from an information campaign about these benefits to a system of intake and enrollment staged at times and in places convenient to low income working families and individuals. The City streamlined and expanded this approach in 2003 by helping low-income working families and individuals obtain \$4.3 million in available benefits for which they were eligible but not enrolled.

In 2004 the Help for Working Families team will implement the following strategies to maximize effectiveness and achieve the best results:

- Improve outreach and intake processes by systematizing community outreach and strengthening in-house application intake systems.
- Develop an integrated web-based portal system.
- Expand availability of Help for Working Families program specialists through:
 - Regular availability at City of Seattle Neighborhood Service Centers, WorkSource Centers, Teen Health Centers, places of employment and Community Colleges.
 - Partnering with Mutual Assistance Associations to expand enrollment of hard-to-reach refugee and immigrant populations.
 - Expand Help for Working Families to other Health and Human Service Providers such as Family Centers, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, and Community Clinics.

As a result, 22,700 people will be contacted about eligibility for HFWF Benefit Programs, 3,385 applications will be initiated, 2,400 program enrollments will be submitted and Seattle residents will receive \$3,970,000 in additional income or assistance.

➤ Expand opportunities to find and keep livable wage jobs:

Seattle Jobs Initiative

Seattle will continue to support the Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) program. SJI leverages workforce and human service innovations to place low-income residents in quality jobs and create competitive advantage for employers in our region.

SJI has made a concerted effort to reach diverse, low-income residents with significant barriers to employment. Of the people served, 79% are people of color, 35% are on some form of public assistance at time of enrollment and nearly all participants have one or more barriers to employment such as homelessness, substance abuse, mental health issues and limited English proficiency.

To date, SJI has placed over 3,600 people with hundreds of local employers at an average starting wage of \$10.04 per hour. SJI has a 12-month retention rate of 60%. Of the individuals placed 44% have advanced within 12 months and earn an average wage of \$13.06 per hour.

INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Excessive rent burdens and low vacancy rates have gravely affected low-income Seattle households. Housing assistance programs identified in this plan help individuals and families stabilize housing and focus their attention on attaining a better standard of living. The City's focus will continue to be on multi-family rental units for households with incomes below 30% of median income. Seattle will increase the programs available to assist households to move from subsidized rental units to become homeowners as the next step on the housing continuum.

Seattle also assists low-income homeowners, particularly seniors, with home rehabilitation loans and minor repairs in an effort to keep them in their homes. In addition, SJI also connects job seekers and training participants to affordable housing resources to assist in their attainment of living wage jobs.

Maintaining Affordable Housing

Preservation of existing affordable housing is critical to addressing affordable housing needs in Seattle. Many of the strategies described in the Housing Strategic Plan chapter of the Consolidated Plan specifically relate to preservation. Key preservation strategies include programs that provide funding for projects with expiring regulatory agreements and deferred maintenance needs, and active monitoring of OH's portfolio of City-funded affordable housing units to ensure their long-term physical and financial viability.